



KING COUNTY REGIONAL

AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

**THE FUTURE OF AFIS
INCLUDING INITIATIVES 2007-2012
MAY 15, 2006**



THANK YOUS AND REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AFIS	6
Mission and Goals for AFIS	6
Initiatives 2007-2012	7
Future Funding of AFIS – Dedicated Property Tax	9
Periodic Review	9
INTRODUCTION.....	11
AFIS PLANNING PROCESS.....	11
AFIS BACKGROUND	13
STRUCTURE OF AFIS	13
CAPTURE Fingerprints from Suspects	13
STORE Fingerprints on Databases	14
SEARCH AND IDENTIFY Individuals from Fingerprints.....	15
SOLVE CRIMES by Identifying Prints Left at Crime Scenes	17
SHARE Fingerprint and Arrest Data with Other Jurisdictions	19
Administrative Team.....	19
THE FUTURE OF AFIS 2007 FORWARD.....	21
MISSION AND GOALS.....	21
Mission	21
Goals	21
Recommendation Mission and Goals.....	23
STATUS QUO OPERATIONS.....	24
OVERVIEW OF 2007 TO 2012 INITIATIVES.....	26
New Generation AFIS	27
Live Scan Upgrade to High Definition	27
Increase in Criminal Live Scan Capture Stations	28
Palm Searching & Storage	28
Court Identification Feasibility Study	30
Mobile Identification.....	31
Workload Driven Staffing	32
AFIS Photographers for the Photo Labs	32
Live Scan Applicant Units	33
Recommendation 2007-2012 Initiatives	34
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS	36
Expenditures.....	36
Revenues	37
Recommendation - Dedicated AFIS Property Tax:	38
PERIODIC REVIEW	40
Recommendation Periodic Review	40

APPENDICIES	41
A. AFIS LEVY HISTORY AND EVOLUTION	42
First AFIS Levy (1987-1990).....	42
Second AFIS Levy (1991-1995)	43
Third AFIS Levy (1996-2000)	44
Fourth AFIS Levy (2001-2005)	45
B. AFIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	48
C. AFIS TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	49
D. OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ...	50
Technical Subcommittee Summary of Themes	51
Consensus For Funding Survey From The Technical Subcommittee	54
E. SURVEY OF TEN-PRINT AND LATENT OPERATIONS.....	55
F. LIVE SCAN ELECTRONIC VS INKED FINGERPRINT SUBMITTALS ...	59
G. LIVE SCAN EQUIPMENT LOCATION – 2005.....	61
H. ENHANCEMENTS APPENDICIES	62
New Generation AFIS	63
Live Scan High Definition Upgrade	66
Live Scan Increase – Criminal Capture Stations.....	68
Palm Activation with Minimum Master Card Conversion	70
Staffing to Support Palm Search Capabilities	73
Court Identification Feasibility Study	74
Mobile Identification Infrastructure (Including Three-Unit Vendor Proof of Concept)	76
Workload Driven Staffing	78
AFIS Photographers for the Photo Labs	80
Court Identification Pilot Project	82
Mobile Identification Pilot Project.....	83
Complete Palm Card Conversion.....	85
Live Scan Applicant Units	86
I: FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE DETAILS AND FINANCIAL PLAN	87

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide policy and financial direction for the future of the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program in King County. The plan contains the recommendations from the AFIS Advisory Committee (AAC) and reflects the collaborative efforts of regional partners in criminal justice and the Regional AFIS staff.

AFIS is the *voter-approved, levy-funded*, countywide Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System Program; a valuable public safety tool that quickly assists criminal justice agencies to fingerprint and identify arrested individuals or suspects of crimes. The AFIS Program was established as a regional system in 1988, and in 1992 was expanded to a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week operation.

The Program's primary functions are to:

1. *CAPTURE* fingerprints from suspects, to
2. *STORE* fingerprints in databases, to
3. *SEARCH AND IDENTIFY* individuals from fingerprints in order to
4. *SOLVE CRIMES* by identifying prints left at crime scenes, and to
5. *SHARE* fingerprint and arrest data with other jurisdictions.

Since the inception of AFIS, more crimes with unidentified suspects have been solved. Capturing finger and palm prints from every subject booked into jail, storing those fingerprints in an electronic database, and using those prints to match against prints left behind at crime scenes have enabled police detectives to solve many crimes where the detectives have had no known suspects.

How far AFIS has come....	Prior to AFIS Program (1988)	In 2005
Crimes solved by identification of fingerprints without a suspect (cold hits) (<i>17,141 Cold Hits made since inception in 1988 through December 2005</i>)	0	1,770
Number of inmates fingerprinted at King County Jails	< 50%	100%
Percent of inmates giving false name at jail booking correctly identified prior to release from custody	1%	96%
Average turnaround time from jail booking to identification	2-4 weeks	1.4 hours

How far AFIS has come continued....	Prior to AFIS Program (1988)	In 2005
Percent of fingerprints taken and submitted using Live Scan Capture Stations*	0%	97%
Electronic fingerprint search capabilities via networking**	None	Access to millions
<p>* Jurisdictions without direct access to Live Scan Capture Stations in 2005 include: Algona Police Department; Black Diamond Police Department; Clyde Hill Police Department; Enumclaw Police Department; Medina Police Department; Normandy Park Police Department; Pacific Police Department; Snoqualmie Department of Public Safety; University of WA Police Department. However, each of the agencies who have been granted a Live Scan Capture Station must agree to share that Capture Station with other jurisdictions so that every jurisdiction has access to a Live Scan Capture Station. (See Appendix F)</p> <p>** Networks include the FBI, Washington State Patrol, and Western Identification Network.</p>		

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AFIS

Mission and Goals for AFIS

During its 18-year history, the original intent of the Regional AFIS Program was to provide a database of fingerprints to solve crimes. AFIS employees learned early on that the capture of quality fingerprints is integral to a successful database. As such, the Regional AFIS Program has grown to prioritize the collection of quality fingerprints. Paramount to the mission is the rapid identification of persons arrested, booked or adjudicated for adult and juvenile offenses. With advances in technology, the future holds great promise for more sophisticated integration with other local, state and national criminal justice systems. The progression of the Regional AFIS Program shows that its mission and goals must remain dynamic to meet these emerging demands and opportunities. The following mission statement was adopted in 1996 by the AFIS Advisory Committee to reflect these themes.

AFIS Mission

To provide timely, efficient, and quality fingerprint identification services in support of local criminal investigations through a countywide system linked to state and national fingerprint and criminal history databases.

AFIS Goal Statements

- I. Obtain the highest quality fingerprints for the AFIS Database
- II. Capture as many prints as legally permissible in the AFIS Database
- III. Support timely identification of individuals (adult and juvenile)
- IV. Provide training for King County Sheriff's Office, Seattle Police Department, and suburban police to take ten-prints and lift crime scene (latent) prints with the highest possible quality and give expert testimony
- V. Increase awareness of the Regional AFIS Program to the criminal justice community

- VI. *Improve ease of access for local law enforcement agencies to AFIS*
- VII. *Support criminal investigations by expeditiously processing latent prints (aspire to the fastest possible turnaround time for processing latent prints)*
- VIII. *Support electronic arrest reporting from the originating agency throughout the system*
- IX. *Support consistent, complete, accurate and non-duplicative criminal history reporting*
- X. *Upgrade AFIS equipment in a manner that is consistent with enhancing links to the Washington State Patrol and the Western Identification Network and that supports emerging regional and national standards*
- XI. *Adhere to state and national standards for technical and operational aspects of fingerprints*

The AFIS Advisory Committee recommends continuation of the adopted Mission and Goals for the AFIS Program.

Initiatives 2007-2012

The AFIS Advisory Committee reviewed a set of initiatives to meet the continuing technological and operational needs of the community. The events of 9-11, the court mandate for greater forensic scientific standards, the more mobile nature of the County's population, and technological advancements have necessitated a review of existing AFIS technology. As a part of this evaluation process, the AFIS Advisory Committee received input¹ from experts, law enforcement stakeholders, and end-users. The process was exhaustive and identified many potential enhancements. In the end the committee supported the core enhancements necessary for the Regional AFIS Program to remain efficient, effective, and current with industry and professional standards.

Based on:

- *The need to enhance existing programs to meet emerging community needs;*
- *The need to maintain or improve current systems for the collection and identification of suspects in King County to meet emerging standards;*
- *Reviewing the performance, finances, and corresponding operations of the Regional AFIS Program; and*
- *Recognizing that the implementation of the initiatives is dependent on future funding.*

The AFIS Advisory Committee recommends the following initiatives for the years 2007-2012²:

¹ See Appendix D.

² See page 26 for an Overview of the 2007-2012 Initiatives

- ***Implementation of a New Generation Computer, replacing the existing AFIS Computer;***
- ***Upgrade the current Live Scan Capture Stations to capture data at higher resolution;***
- ***Increase the current inventory of Criminal Live Scan Capture Stations by five units to address remaining gaps in service in the region;***
- ***Implement Palm Searching and Storage capabilities, converting current master card inventory to an electronic database, and adding three positions to search, capture, and identify palm prints left at crime scenes;***
- ***Increase staffing in conjunction with increases in workload ensuring that staffing levels will be re-evaluated annually in the budget cycle based on available funding;***
- ***Implement a “Court Identification Feasibility Study” to consider the legal, financial, and operational policies and needs of the court system to identify and collect fingerprints from defendants;***
- ***Establish the infrastructure to ensure that King County law enforcement entities which implement wireless Mobile Identification can access and communicate with the Regional AFIS computer;***
- ***Add two AFIS Photographers to photographically process and preserve finger and palm print evidence recovered from crime scenes;***
- ***Pilot a three-unit Court Identification Project based on the outcome of the Court Identification Feasibility Study;***
- ***Pilot a ten-unit Mobile Identification Study in order to ensure different wireless vendors can communicate with the AFIS Computer and access the AFIS Database.***

Future Funding of AFIS – Dedicated Property Tax

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 84.520.043 allows jurisdictions to levy a property tax; King County can increase a levy with voter approval under RCW 84.55.050. In King County, the Regional AFIS Program is a countywide, levy-funded program and requires voter approval every levy period.

The AFIS Levy is a regular property tax and is subjected to the growth limitations contained in RCW 84.52.050 which limits the rate of growth in AFIS Levy revenue by one percent plus the prior years' new construction even if assessed values increase at a higher rate.

Based on:

- *Valuing the AFIS service as an integrated regional crime solving tool;*
- *The Regional AFIS Program being a voter- approved, levy- funded program since inception in 1988;*
- *An extensive review of the Regional AFIS Program including staffing, performance outcomes, technology, and needed enhancements for the future; and*
- *Ongoing stable funding is required to ensure a consistent regional automated fingerprint identification system.*

The AFIS Advisory Committee recommends as its first choice:

- *Financial projections based on the implementation of the 2007-2012 initiatives indicate an AFIS permanent statutory levy rate of 5.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for the foreseeable future.*

In the event that a permanent statutory levy is not viable, the AFIS Advisory Committee puts forth as its second choice:

- *Financial projections based on the implementation of the 2007-2012 initiatives indicate an AFIS statutory levy rate of 5.33 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for the period of 2007-2012 under RCW 84.55.050 (3) (b) for the multi-year lid lift.*

Periodic Review

In recognizing the importance of continuing oversight and evaluation, the AFIS Advisory Committee believes a periodic review is integral to the Regional AFIS Operations. The AFIS Advisory Committee has a continuing commitment to ensure this program is run efficiently and effectively.

Based on:

- *Acknowledging that the annual work plan is adopted by the King County Council*

- through the annual budget process;*
- *Acknowledging the need to ensure that the Regional AFIS Program continues to meet the needs of the community and industry performance standards; and*
 - *Ensuring the continued challenge to meet “best practices” in the fingerprint community.*

The AFIS Advisory Committee recommends:

- ***If the King County voters approve a permanent funding source for the Regional AFIS Program, then every five years the Regional AFIS Program management staff would prepare a comprehensive review of the Program including, at a minimum, staffing, emerging issues, evaluation of workload, and industry best practices.***
- ***If the King County voters approve a six-year levy funding source for the Regional AFIS Program, then AFIS Program management staff would prepare a comprehensive review of the Program upon commencement of the renewal or replacement of the funding stream addressing, at minimum, staffing, emerging issues, evaluation of workload, and industry best practices.***
- ***In addition, the Regional AFIS Program management staff will prepare an update to this review and subsequent comprehensive reviews on an annual basis including, at a minimum, system performance measures and status of the plan initiatives.***

INTRODUCTION

The King County Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program is funded by a voter-approved levy³ and provides a technical platform for fingerprint identification services throughout the county with links to other state, regional, and federal databases. The program allows the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), its Contract Cities, the Seattle Police Department (SPD), and the Suburban Police Departments within the county access to fingerprint identification information. Central to the program is the AFIS Database and Image Archive System housed at the King County Sheriff's Office and shared by Seattle Police Department and Bellevue Police Department through remote workstations. The King County Regional AFIS Computer was first implemented in 1988, with a "Year 2000" upgrade in 1999.

The current AFIS 2000-2005 Levy⁴ expired on December 31, 2005. Careful management of funds, combined with slightly higher than expected revenues, allowed the Regional AFIS Program to meet its operational costs for an additional year, through December 2006, without additional levy revenues. Effective, January 2007, the AFIS program will require a renewal or other dedicated funding source for continuation of this critical forensic tool.

AFIS PLANNING PROCESS

In November 2005, the AFIS Advisory Committee (AAC)⁵ commissioned the Technical Subcommittee (TSC)⁶ to review the operations of the Regional AFIS Program, and to recommend to the AAC a set of prioritized programs and enhancements to meet emerging community needs and current standards for the collection and identification of suspects in King County.

The TSC met a total of nine times over the period from December 2005 through March 2006. The TSC reviewed in detail each proposed initiative item for the Regional AFIS Program, challenging the assumptions, timing, financial implications, and relevance to the AFIS System. The TSC put forth a set of enhancements to status quo, categorized by funding ranking, to the AAC for its final recommendation⁷.

In addition to the TSC, the AAC also received information from an extensive stakeholder outreach process. All AFIS users were surveyed about Live Scan operations and latent

³ See Appendix A for AFIS Levy history.

⁴ See Appendix A for AFIS Levy history.

⁵ AAC includes membership from Seattle, Suburban Cities, and King County. See Appendix B for a membership list.

⁶ TSC was commissioned by the AAC and included membership from Seattle, Suburban Cities, and King County. See Appendix C for a membership list.

⁷ See Appendix D for TSC Summary of Themes and Funding Priorities.

service operations⁸.

The AFIS users were asked four questions:

- In relation to AFIS, are there any gaps in service that you have recognized? What are they?
- What is the top thing public and policy makers need to know about AFIS? Why?
- Anything that you, as AFIS users, want to know about AFIS?
- Are there any other enhancements/changes to AFIS that you feel would be important to pursue in the future?

Lastly, the levy planning process included a review of all proposed technological enhancements by the King County Chief Information Officer. His review found no areas of concern with the technological planning effort underway, noting that all the technology solutions would be implemented in compliance with national standards.

⁸ The full survey responses can be found in Appendix E